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Newton elected 14th Southern Ute chairman

GoodTracks, Torres to join council

By Ace Stryker
The Southern Ute Drum

Jimmy R. Newton Jr. is the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's new chairman.

Newton was sworn in on Thursday, Dec. 15 in the Sky Ute Casino Resort's Events Center, succeeding Pearl E. Casias. Joining him on the council are Pathimi GoodTracks and Aaron Torres, who take the places of Alex Cloud and Marge Borst.

And just like that, more than half of the tribe's governing body has turned over in the past six weeks. Howard D. Richards Sr. was elected on Tuesday, Nov. 1 to fill Newton's unexpired term.

"I think we can do a lot working together," Newton said of the council. "It's not the chairman that is going to lead us to our future, but it is all of us together."

In his first speech to the membership, Newton thanked his predecessors on the council, the

tribe's elders and veterans, and everyone else who contributes to the tribe as a whole.

He said he was honored to run for election against Casias.

"It was a very exciting opportunity to run against someone with a lot of history and experience," he said. "I am just a simple man with a simple plan to serve the tribal membership."

Following a precedent set by Chairman Matthew J. Box in 2008, Newton announced he would appoint two executive officers: Steve R. Herrera Sr. and Amy Barry. He said he was looking for someone with "compassion for the people" and ultimately decided on two.

"This job is a very big job," he said. "I would like the tribal membership to support the decision I have made."

Newton said he hasn't decided on a vice chairman yet and will



photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

New Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council members (left to right) Pathimi GoodTracks, Chairman Jimmy R. Newton Jr., and Aaron V. Torres greet the tribal membership wrapped in Pendleton blankets given to them by Ute Mountain Ute Chairman Gary Hayes.

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photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council member James M. Olguin and Ute Mountain Ute Vice Chairman Bradley Hight wrap a Pendleton blanket around outgoing Chairman Pearl E. Casias during a farewell reception in the Leonard C. Burch Building's Hall of Warriors on Monday, Dec. 5. The reception also honored council members Alex Cloud and Marge Borst and Executive Officer Andrew C. Frost.

Selling cookies to save eagles



photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

Freedom Hunter, a student at the Southern Ute Montessori Academy, helps raise money during the school's annual bake sale in the Leonard C. Burch Building's Hall of Warriors on Thursday, Dec. 8. Each year, the six-year students determine a legacy project for themselves. The students wanted to support six bald eagles this year as a reflection of their school's new mascot. Proceeds from the bake sale went to support the preservation of bald eagle habitats through the National Wildlife Federation. Fundraising will be achieved through various projects and ongoing student collaboration. "Save the Eagles" was initiated and organized by the students themselves as a legacy they intend to leave behind once they transition.

Tribe, staff bid farewell to outgoing council members

By Ace Stryker
The Southern Ute Drum

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe hosted a farewell reception on Monday, Dec. 5 for outgoing Chairman Pearl E. Casias and Tribal Council members Alex Cloud and Marge Borst in the Leonard C. Burch Building's Hall of Warriors.

Also honored was Executive Officer Andrew C. Frost, an appointee of Casias' who vacated his office at the same time as the chairman per tribal law. He was quickly called back to work, though, as Acting Chairman James M. Olguin invited him to stay on as acting executive officer until the Dec. 14 elections.

Emotion could be heard in Casias' voice as she thanked the tribal members and staffers present for their support.

"I've enjoyed my eight months," she said. "It was hard work, but I know the tribe is going to benefit from our endeavors."

She urged the remaining council members to keep up the fight to preserve the tribe's sovereignty and protect its natural resources.

"We have become warriors in

"We're here for the membership. Always remember that. We [do] it for the membership so that the tribe stays strong."

— Alex Cloud, former council member

the halls of Congress," she said. "Thank you all for everything. Thank you for your support. Thank you for welcoming me back in April."

Cloud began his farewell address by thanking the staff for their work and reminding them that it's the tribal membership they serve.

"We're here for the membership. Always remember that," he said. "We [do] it for the member-

ship so that the tribe stays strong."

Borst called her time in office a "really, really enjoyable time."

"What I've learned in these three years is that our membership is vitally important, from our babies to our elders," she said.

Her last message echoed what she has said in the Council Chambers many times: Health is the most important thing. She closed by saying she doesn't know what comes next — maybe gardening, maybe a return to her roots in radio work — but it's bound to be an exciting journey.

Each of the three outgoing council members was presented with a Pendleton blanket.

Frost thanked Casias for allowing him to "complete my journey" after his appointment to the executive office under then-chairman Matthew J. Box abruptly ended. He joked that accepting the job was awkward at first, because Frost had to tell her he didn't vote for her. But it worked out in the end, he said.

"It was probably one of the best decisions I ever made," he said. "It's been a great trip — one I'll always remember, always cherish."

SunUte: A decade of healing



photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

Southern Ute tribal elder Byron Frost was among those honored during the 10-year anniversary celebration at the SunUte Community Center on Saturday, Dec. 3. Frost and his son, Brian Frost, were credited with the early conception of the recreation facility as a healthy place for tribal members to workout. Reflecting on his own ideas early in the process, Frost said the center was conceived as a healing area, a place to "heal mind, body and soul." Former Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council member and vice chairman Vida Peabody commended the Frosts, saying she admires them for never giving up on the idea. Opening ceremonies were followed by activities, photographs with Santa, and refreshments throughout the day.